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SUBJECT: Chalabi's Provision of Services Committee - February 26

¶1. SUMMARY: In the regular weekly meeting, the committee discussed issues ranging from electricity in Sabi' Al Bor, to Amanat Clean Up days and a host of issues related to Haifa Street. Despite being a holiday week, the meeting was well attended. Representatives from the Ministries of Electricity, Education, Health and Defense were present, as were representatives from the National Security Advisor (NSA), Joint Planning Commission (JPC), Iraqi Red Crescent (IRC) and the Baghdad Operations Command (BOC). The Mayor of Sabi' Al Bor and Baghdad Deputy Mayor Naiem also attended. END SUMMARY.

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Representatives from Sabi' Al Bor Visit the Services Committee  
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¶2. Members of the Provision of Services Committee visited Sabi' Al Bor in late November. Since that visit, several committee recommendations have been implemented to improve services in the area. However, according to the Mayor, Sabi' Al Bor still has several problems to overcome.

¶3. Electricity is not reliable due to cable theft. Dr. Chalabi asked the Sabi' Al Bor representatives, including the Awakening Council Chairman, to identify who was stealing the cables and asked what was being done to stop the illegal activity. The Awakening Council Chair blamed unemployed men for stealing the cables. He said that 400 Awakening Council members were not enough to provide security in the area. The BOC asked the Awakening Council to better cooperate with them by sharing any reports of misconduct. Dr. Chalabi encouraged the local government to enforce the rule of law. The Awakening Council Chair noted that four cases are currently being processed through the judicial system. Dr. Chalabi then offered 5 million dinars reward for any person caught cutting the electrical cables. (Note: It is not clear whether Dr. Chalabi was offering his own money or money from the committee. However, it is our understanding that the committee does not have a budget. End Note)

¶4. Additionally, the Mayor presented a formal letter detailing the water problems in the area. He acknowledged and thanked the Ministry of Electricity for their efforts to provide electricity to several pumping stations. However, he claimed that several outlying villages are not receiving sufficient water due mainly to theft, but compounded by electricity and fuel shortages and clogged drainage and irrigation canals. He asked for the committee's attention to this matter. The second brigade will follow up with both the electricity and water issues.

¶5. The Mayor also noted that the health situation has declined over the last month after a slight improvement resulting from the Committee's visit in November. The Mayor and Dr. Tahseen al Shekhli (Fard al-Qanoon spokesperson) both commented that formerly displaced persons who returned to Sabi' Al Bor recently are again reportedly leaving the area due to security and insufficient services. The NSA representative disagreed, noting that security was the "real" problem and he encouraged the Awakening Council to do more.

¶6. The Iraqi Red Crescent offered to assist with food ration card (PDS) distribution in Sabi' Al Bor and other related PDS issues. The Mayor noted that the local police are handling it. Dr. Chalabi

suggested that the IRC work with the police; however, the IRC contended that they are not permitted to work with local government entities under Iraqi law. The Amanat also noted their interest in establishing municipal offices in Sabi' Al Bor. They asked the Mayor and Awakening Council Chair to send a list of qualified individuals to be considered for employment. The list is to contain both Sunni and Shia names.

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Cleaning Up Baghdad  
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¶7. The Amanat has proceeded with a November 20 recommendation to implement a "clean-up day" to include trash collection and cleaning sewage and storm drainage canals every first Saturday of the month. Despite truck shortages, the Amanat would like to add the third Saturday of every month to the rotation.

¶8. Deputy Mayor Naeim also discussed the issues delaying the privatization of cleaning services around the city. He stated that bids have been received for specialized equipment and trucks, but the prices are too high. He wants the Prime Minister to authorize the Amanat to purchase these items.

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Haifa Street Association  
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¶9. A Haifa Street Association representative sought assistance and support from the committee to address several challenges. According to the representative, only 20% of current residents are legally residing in the 1,500+ apartments. The Association wants assistance in conducting a more thorough survey to determine who the other 80% are. Dr. Chalabi asked the BOC to send several officers to assist - the BOC agreed. The NSA representative said that the National Investigation Agency of the Ministry of Interior maintained a database of Haifa Street residents. As a result, Dr. Chalabi requested that the NSA get a copy of the database to compare the results of the Association's study with that database. Dr. Chalabi assigned a staff person from his committee and the BOC agreed to assign several officers to assist in the comparative research.

¶10. Listing service problems, including limited electrical supply, no trash pick-up, fire hazards, potable water shortages and poor sewage treatment, the Association blamed much of this on the municipal office, a local branch of the Amanat. The Association claimed that Coalition Forces have provided a significant amount of funding to rehabilitate Haifa Street and entrusted much of that money to the municipal office. According to the Association representative, little improvements have been felt because there is a significant amount of corruption within the municipal office, stating that "the Municipal Council members started awarding contracts on their own, which resulted in a lot of negativities that have benefited no one except for the contractor and any of the Municipal Council members who have been collaborating with him."

Crocker